

Report on the movement of the Italian Socialist Party from the year 1907 to June 1910

Political movement

The political movement of the Italian socialist Party from 1907 till to-day may be conjectured by results of the political elections (for the election of the Deputies at the National Parliament) and by the administrative electoral struggles (for the nomination of the municipal councilor and political councilors).

In March 1909 the general elections took place for the total renovation of the Chamber of Deputies: the legislature which came forth from those elections is the XXIII of the Italian Kingdom. During the preceding legislature (XXII) the socialist Party had in Parliament, at first *thirty Deputies*, then twenty-five, because all the parliamentary group, having resigned, in consequence of internal discords, when the elections took place, five members of our Party were not reelected.

In the present legislature we have 41 socialist M.P., 39 of which are regularly inscribed in the Party and adherent to the parliamentary socialist group — one is absolutely independent, the other, although inscribed in the Party, has separated itself from the group.

By the electoral meetings of March 1909, after the voting of the second scrutiny, the socialist M.P. were 43, but when the Chamber was opened, the Parliamentary Commission for the elections succeeded in suppressing the election of three of our companions and in the fourth college of Turin, renewing the elections, the new socialist candidate was overcome and so we lost four mandates.

To the increased number of socialist deputies, corresponded a notable increase of electors for all our candidates, so that the socialist Party affirmed itself, in the general elections of 1909 as the strongest of all Italian parties, regularly and distinctly organized. We presented on our part, about 150 candidates (the political colleges in Italy are 508), and on many of them we collected imposing votings, so that about twenty more did not succeed for a difference of ten votes or so.

The greater number of Deputies elected, as well as votings were gathered, belong to the North and Centre of Italy (Lombardia, Piemonte, Liguria, Veneto, Emilia, Toscana, Marche, Umbria) the South gave but two socialist members, the election of one of those two was annulled.

It may be useful to note that the general political elections in 1909 took place almost everywhere, in accord with the other two parties of the opposition the republican and radical and that therefore many thousands of our companions votes went to the advantage of the republican or radical candidate in those colleges where no socialist candidate presented himself, after which we must conclude that the total of our votes is in reality notably superior to that which now is noted in the statistics.

The relator cannot close this brief summary of the last political activity of the Italian Socialist Party, without remembering the deep mourning which struck the same party by the loss of Andrea Costa, propagator and fighter amongst the first of the international socialism, dean of the Parliamentary Group, invested in this legislature of the high office of vice-president of the Chamber.

Especially in the summer of 1907 but also in posterior periods, the strength of the Socialist Party, manifested itself in the municipal and provincial elections, not only for the increased contingent of our votes in a *large* part of the country, but also for the happened conquest of many minor municipalities for the penetration of our men in the Councils of Several provinces of the North and Centre of Italy and especially for the conquest obtained in alliance with other

parties of democracy, in the municipal administrations of some of our great and illustrious cities of Italy — especially Rome, Florence and Genoa — where we got the victory of these days.

Progress of the organization

The largest number of those inscribed to the Party was reached in the year 1908, at the National Congress of Florence, which took place in September, 40 thousand of us were represented, at the end of the year we reached the number of 43,000 adherents.

But in that Congress happened the definitive detachment of the Sindacalist Fraction and, besides, the same Congress decided the increase of the price of the ticket of inscription, rising it from 60 centimes — as it had been till then — to It. lire 1.50, applying therefore the rule of the obligation equal to all members of the Party, to contribute to the maintenance of our official newspaper: *Avanti!*, because it was decided that precisely on behalf of this paper the two thirds of the contribution should go.

These two facts determined, as it was naturally foreseen, a sensible reduction of sections and members in the sections which remained inscribed at the Party, that from the 43 thousand of 1908 retrenched to about 30 thousand in 1909. A third cause of this sensible diminution, must be sought in the fact of the general polit-

ical elections for which all the sections of the Party underwent extraordinary and enormous expenses; a fourth cause was the terrible earthquake of the 28th December 1908, which destroyed the two large cities of Reggio Calabria and Messina, and a number of other centres of the two provinces and in which many of our companions perished and which brought to the destruction of almost all the political and economical local organizations.

This reduction of partners does not at all mean a weakening of socialist energies in Italy nor a weakness of the Party. And the proof of what we state we have it to-day in the increasing which we already see of the sections and in the total number of the members of our Party, so that we believe that we may reach to the next national Congress (Milan 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 October next) with a membership not much inferior to that of 1908.

The trade unions and the cooperative action

Flourishing disciplined is now in Italy the trade union organization, which although declares and keeps itself unpolitical, agrees with our Party and follows almost everywhere its directions and economical principles, according to the deliberations and votes of the National Congress of the General Confe-

deration of Work, which took place in Modena in 1908, a few weeks before the Socialist National Congress.

In the same full development is the cooperative action, through valuable companions who are at the head of almost all the Cooperatives of Production and work and of consumption flourishing in several provinces but especially in Emilia, Romagna, Liguria, Piemonte, Lombardia, Toscana, Lazio and generally speaking in all the North and the Centre of Italy.

Other forms of organizations are the mutual societies which every day transform and modernize, under the guide of the socialists, who continually conquer them and try to create new ones, the Popular Universities, exclusive emanation and initiative of our Party, are at present in existence in large cities, and in small communes, the Popular Libraries also begun by us, and which flourished afterwards thanks to our work.

The press of the Party

This Secretaryship has sent to the International Bureau, separately, the complete enumeration of the socialist newspapers (5 daily and about 120 weekly).

In regards to the printing off — which varies — especially for the weekly ones — with the changing of

the season, as a large number of our workmen emigrate on account of their work, it can be calculated about two thousand copies for each weekly and nearly two thousand copies the five daily papers.

We close this short resume of all the activities and manifestations of the Socialist Party by noting that it keeps constant and cordial terms with the Socialist Parties of other Nations.

The Political Secretary
POMPEO CIOTTI.